

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
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AMCONSUL HAMBURG
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AMCONSUL STUTTGART
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USCINCEUR, USAREUR AND USAFE FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: INITIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF CDU VICTORY IN HESSEN COMMUNAL
ELECTION AND U.S. INTERESTS

REF : FRANKFURT 2162

1. IN WAKE OF LAST SUNDAY'S SPD DEFEAT AND
NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT HE COULD HAVE REMAINED
IN OFFICE ANOTHER YEAR (SEE PARA 2 REFTEL) FRANKFURT
LORD MAYOR RUDI ARNDT ANNOUNCED HIS IMMEDIATE
RESIGNATION IN THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 22. THIS
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DECISION FOLLOWED A SERIES OF HASTY CONSULTATIONS
WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL SPD LEADERS. ARNDT'S
RESIGNATION WILL CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE NEW CDU
CONTROLLED CITY PARLIAMENT TO ELECT DR. WALTER
WALLMANN, CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY AND CURRENT MANAGER
OF THE CDU FRAKTION IN THE BUNDESTAG, TO BECOME
FRANKFURT'S NEW LORD MAYOR, AN EVENT WHICH FOR LEGAL

REASONS WILL PROBABLY NOT TAKE PLACE FOR ANOTHER SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II THE CDU WILL THUS ASSUME LEADERSHIP IN FRANKFURT. BEGINNING WITH THE FIRST COMMUNAL ELECTION IN THE SPRING OF 1946 THE POST OF LORD MAYOR HAD UNTIL NOW BEEN HELD BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

2. OTHER REPERCUSSIONS WILL SOON FOLLOW TO WHAT WAS A DISASTROUS LONG WEEKEND FOR THE SPD NOT ONLY IN HESSEN BUT IN OTHER RESPECTS AS WELL (SEE BONN 4959).

A. AS FAR AS THE SPD IS CONCERNED, LAST SUNDAY'S DEFEAT WILL CONFIRM A DECISION TENTATIVELY ARRIVED AT EVEN BEFORE THE ELECTION THAT AS OF JULY 11, 1977, HESSIAN MINISTER-PRESIDENT HOLGER BOERNER WILL REPLACE ALBERT OSSWALD AS LAND CHAIRMAN OF THE SPD. AT THE SAME TIME THE QUESTION WILL AGAIN ARISE WHETHER THE SOUTH HESSEN AND NORTH HESSEN SPD ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE LONG OPERATED WITH CONSIDERABLE INDEPENDENCE SHOULD BE MERGED INTO A SINGLE GROUPING. THIS IS BOUND TO BE A CONTROVERSIAL QUESTION SINCE BOTH THE HEAVILY LEFT-WING INFLUENCED SOUTH HESSEN ORGANIZATION AS WELL AS THE CONSERVATIVE BUT SMALLER NORTH HESSEN GROUPING HAVE IN THE PAST RESISTED A MERGER FOR FEAR THAT IT WOULD RESULT IN THE ENTIRE PARTY ORGANIZATION BEING DOMINATED BY ONE OR THE OTHER ELEMENT.

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B. IN THIS LOCALITIES IN HESSEN WHERE THE CDU EMERGED LAST SUNDAY AS THE STRONGEST PARTY BUT FAILED TO GAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY THE QUESTION ARISES WITH WHICH OF THE TWO LARGE PARTIES THE FDP WHICH ALSO LOST LAST SUNDAY WILL ENTER INTO LOCAL COALITIONS. THIS IS A QUESTION IN WHICH LOCAL DECISIONS MAY WELL BE INFLUENCED BY LONGER-TERM AND NATIONAL LEVEL FDP CONSIDERATIONS.

3. AMERICAN LOCAL INTERESTS IN THE STATE OF HESSEN AND ITS LOCAL AUTHORITIES REVOLVE HEAVILY AROUND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLITICAL LEADERS AND THE LARGE AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF ALMOST 100,000, THE BULK OF WHICH ARE MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT THESE RELATIONSHIPS WHICH HAVE GENERALLY BEEN EXCELLENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE MORE RECENT PERIOD, WILL BE AFFECTED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BY THE CHANGES IN CITY AND OTHER LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS WHICH WILL

NOW BEGIN TO TAKE PLACE AS A RESULT OF THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS. EVEN IN FRANKFURT WHERE RADICAL OR DOCTRINAIRE LEFT-WING TENDENCIES OF PORTIONS OF THE LOCAL SPD HAS AT TIMES INTRODUCED SOME STRAIN ON THE RELATIONSHIP, ESPECIALLY DURING THE VIET NAM WAR YEARS, RELATIONS HAVE BEEN GOOD IN RECENT TIMES. THERE HAVE BEEN OCCASIONS IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD WHEN CDU POLITICIANS HAVE CHARGED ELEMENTS OF THE FRANKFURT CITY ADMINISTRATION, ESPECIALLY ITS CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, WITH IRRITATING THE GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP WITH CERTAIN CITY-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS EXHIBITIONS AND PRESENTATION OF COMMUNIST FILMS WITH STRONG DOSES OF ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA USUALLY RELATED TO VIET NAM. AT THE CITYS CULTURAL CENTER. (THIS HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SEPARATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THIS POST AND EMBASSY BONN). HOWEVER, THERE IS NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE ELECTORATE WAS PARTICULARLY INFLUENCED BY THESE CONSIDERATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME THE CDU POLITICIANS WHO WILL NOW ASSUME POWER IN LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES HAVE OF COURSE ALWAYS MADE A STRONG POINT OF STRESSING THEIR GREAT INTEREST AND ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE NATO AND US-GERMAN ALLIANCES, AND WE CAN EXPECT THAT THEY WILL CERTAINLY BE AT LEAST AS COOPERATIVE AS THEIR SPD PREDECESSORS IN THOSE CASES WHERE THEY WILL REPLACE THE LATTER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. LEHMANN

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